

We Claim:

1. An apparatus for controlling communication-access between a computer
network and either a computer or a modem that has a given port for bi-directional
communication by the computer or the modem with the network, the apparatus
comprising

an access-prevention device having a control terminal, a first connector for
connection to the given port, a second connector for connection to the network, and
electrically powered switching means connected in series between the first and second
connectors and operable in response to a given control signal for preventing receipt by
the first connector of any network communications from the second connector and/or for
preventing receipt by the second connector of any network communications from the first
connector; and

a control terminal connected to the switching means for providing said given
control signal to the switching means from an external source.

2. An apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising manually actuated
means for providing said given control signal to the switching means.

3. An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a power terminal
connected to the switching means for providing electrical power to the switching means
from an external source.

4. An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising

2 a control device connected to the control terminal for automatically controlling
the switching means of the access-prevention device in response to a given measured
4 interval exceeding a predetermined duration to prevent the first connector from receiving
any network communications from the second connector and/or to prevent the second
6 connector from receiving any network communications from the first connector.

5. An apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the control device comprises:

2 sensing means for sensing whether or not an operator is present within a
predetermined space adjacent the computer; and

4 means coupled to the sensing means for measuring each interval when an operator
is not present within said predetermined space and for providing said given control signal
6 to the control terminal whenever the measured interval exceeds a predetermined duration;

8 wherein said automatic control of the access-prevention device is in response to
said given control signal.

6. An apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the control device comprises:

2 a timer, including means for selecting a predetermined duration, means for
measuring an interval beginning upon actuation of the timer and means for providing said
4 given control signal to the control terminal whenever the measured interval exceeds the
predetermined duration;

6 wherein said automatic control of the access-prevention device is in response to
said given control signal.

2 7. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the switching means is connected
only for preventing the first connector from receiving any network communication from
the second connector.

2 8. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the switching means is connected
only for preventing the second connector from receiving any network communication
from the first connector.

2 9. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the switching means is connected
for preventing any network communication between the first connector and the second
connector.

2 10. An apparatus for controlling communication-access between a computer
network and either a computer or a modem that has a given port for bi-directional
communication by the computer or the modem with the network, the apparatus
4 comprising

6 an access-prevention device having a first connector for connection to the given
port, a second connector for connection to the network, and switching means connected
in series between the first and second connectors for preventing receipt by the first
8 connector of any network communications from the second connector and/or for
preventing receipt by the second connector of any network communications from the first
10 connector; and

a control device for controlling the switching means of the access-prevention
device to selectively prevent the first connector from receiving any network
communications from the second connector and/or to selectively prevent the second
connector from receiving any network communications from the first connector.

11. A system for controlling communication-access within a computer network,
comprising:

a computer having a given port for bi-directional communication by the computer
with another computer within the network;

an access-prevention device connected in series with the given port for preventing
the computer from receiving and/or transmitting any communications from and/or to
another computer within the network; and

a control device for controlling the access-prevention device;

wherein the access-prevention device is disposed within a chassis that contains
the computer.

12. A system according to Claim 11, wherein the control device is disposed on
said chassis.

13. A system according to Claim 11, further comprising a keyboard connected to
the computer for controlling operation of the computer;

wherein the control device includes the keyboard.

14. A system according to Claim 11, further comprising a mouse connected to the
computer for controlling operation of the computer;

wherein the control device includes the mouse.

15. A system according to Claim 11, wherein the control device comprises a
manually operable remote-control device for transmitting a given control signal; and

wherein the access-prevention device is controlled in response to said given
control signal.

16. An apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the control device comprises:

sensing means for sensing whether or not an operator is present within a
predetermined space adjacent the computer; and

means coupled to the sensing means for measuring each interval when an operator
is not present within said predetermined space and for providing a given control signal
whenever the measured interval exceeds a predetermined duration;

wherein said automatic control of the access-prevention device is in response to
said given control signal.

17. An apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the control device comprises:

means for measuring each interval when the computer is not performing a routine
in response to an input received from an input device connected directly to the computer
and for providing a given control signal whenever the measured interval exceeds a
predetermined duration;

6 wherein said control of the access-prevention device is in response to said given
control signal.

18. A system for controlling communication-access within a computer network,
2 comprising:

a computer having a given port for bi-directional communication by the computer
4 with another computer within the network;

a modem connected to the given port for processing said bi-directional
6 communication by the computer with another computer within the network;

an access-prevention device connected in series with the given port and the
8 modem for preventing the computer from receiving and/or transmitting any
communications from and/or to another computer within the network; and

10 a control device for controlling the access-prevention device;

12 wherein the access-prevention device is disposed within a chassis that contains
the modem.

19. A system according to Claim 18, wherein the control device is disposed on
2 the chassis that contains the modem.

20. A system according to Claim 18, wherein the control device comprises a
2 manually operable remote-control device for transmitting a given control signal; and

wherein said control of the access-prevention device is in response to said given
4 control signal.

21. A system for controlling communication-access within a computer network,
comprising:

a computer having a given port for bi-directional communication by the computer
with another computer within the network;

an external network-access terminal for enabling said bi-directional
communication by the computer with another computer within the network;

an access-prevention device connected in series with the given port and the
external network-access terminal for preventing the computer from receiving and/or
transmitting any communications from and/or to another computer within the network;
and

a control device for controlling the access-prevention device;

wherein the given port is connected in series with the external access terminal for
enabling said bi-directional communication with the network; and

wherein the access-prevention device is disposed within a housing that contains
the external network-access terminal.

22. A system according to Claim 21, wherein the control device is disposed on
the housing that contains the external network-access terminal.

23. A system according to Claim 21, wherein the control device comprises a
manually operable remote-control device for transmitting a given control signal; and

wherein said control of the access-prevention device is in response to said given
control signal.

24. A system for controlling communication-access within a computer network,
comprising:

a computer having a given port for bi-directional communication by the computer
with another computer within the network;

an external firewall device connected to the given port for providing firewall
protection for the computer;

an access-prevention device connected in series with the given port and the
external firewall device for preventing the computer from receiving and/or transmitting
any communications from and/or to another computer within the network; and

a control device for controlling the access-prevention device;

wherein the access-prevention device is disposed within a housing that contains
the external firewall device.

25. A system according to Claim 24, wherein the control device is disposed on
the housing that contains the external firewall device.

26. A system according to Claim 24, wherein the control device comprises a
manually operable remote-control device for transmitting a given control signal; and

wherein said control of the access-prevention device is in response to said given
control signal.